(Continued from last Sunday.)

Impossibilities were puffed aside like thistles. The men went at them headlong. They gave way before the rush. Thorpe always led. Not for a single instant of the day nor for many at night was he at rest. Instinctively he seemed to realize that a let-down would mean collapse.

After the camp had fallen asleep, he would often lie awake for half of the few hours of their night, every muscle tense, staring at the sky. His mind saw definitely every detail of the situation as he had viewed it. In advance his imagination stooped and sweated to the work which his body was to accomplish next morning. Thus he did everything twice. Then at last the tension would relax. He would fall into uneasy sleep. But twice that did not follow. Through the dissolving iron mist of his striving, a sharp thought cleaved like an arrow. It was that after all he did not care. Subconsciousness, the other influence, was growing like a weed. Perhaps there were greater things than to succeed, greater things than success. And then, then the keen, poignant memory of the dream girl stole into the young man's mind, and in agony was immediately thrust forth. He would not think of her. He had given her up. He refused to believe that he had been wrong. In the still darkness of the night he would rise and steal to the edge of the dully roaring stream. There, his eyes blinded and his throat choked with a longing more manly than tears, he would reach out and smooth the round, rough coats of the great logs.

"We'll do it!" he whispered to them—and to himself. "We'll do it! We can't be wrong."

CHAPTER LI.

Wallace Carpenter's search expedition had proved a failure, as Thorpe had foreseen, but at the end of the week, when the water began to recede, they came upon a mass of flesh and bones. The man was unrecognizable. The remains were wrapped in canvas and sent for interment in the cemetery at Marquette. Three of the others were never found. The last did not come to light until after the drive had quite finished.

Down at the booms the jam crew received the drive as fast as it came down. From one crib to another across the broad extent of the river's mouth, heavy booms were chained end to end effectually to close the exit to Lake Superior. Against these the logs caromed softly in the slackened current, and stopped. The cribs were very heavy with slanting, instead of square, tops, in order that the pressure might be downwards instead of sidewise. In a short time the surface of the lagoon was covered by a brown carpet of logs running in strange patterns like windrows of fallen grain. The drive was all but over.

Up till now the weather had been clear but oppressively hot for this time of year. The heat had come suddenly and maintained itself well. The men had worked for the most part in undershirts. They were as much in the water as out of it, for the icy bath had become almost grateful. Hamilton, the journalist, who had attached himself definitely to the drive, distributed bunches of papers, in which the men read that the unseasonable conditions prevailed all over the country.

At length, however, it gave signs of breaking. The sky, which had been of a steel blue, harbored great piled thunder-heads. Towards evening the thunder-heads shifted and finally dissipated, to be sure, but the portent was there.

Hamilton's papers began to tell of washouts and cloudbursts in the south and west. The men wished they had some of that water here.

So finally the drive approached its end and all concerned began in anticipation to taste the weariness that awaited them. The few remaining tasks still confronting them, all at once seemed more formidable than what they had accomplished. The work for the first time became dogged, distasteful. Even Thorpe was infected. He, too, wanted more than anything else to drop on the bed in Mrs. Hathaway's boarding house. There remained but a few things to do. A mile of sacking would carry the drive beyond the influence of freshet water. After that there would be no hurry.

He looked round at the hard, fatigue-worn faces of the men about him and he suddenly felt a great rush of affection for these comrades who had so unreservedly spent themselves for his affair. Their features showed exhaustion, it is true, but their eyes gleamed still with the steady, half-humorous purpose of the pioneer. When they caught his glance they grinned good-humoredly.

All at once Thorpe turned and started for the bank.

"That'll do, boys," he said quietly to the nearest group. "She's down!"

It was noon. The sackers looked up in surprise. Behind them, to their very feet, rushed the soft, smooth slope of Hemlock rapids. Below them flowed a broad, peaceful river. The drive had passed its last obstruction. To all intents and purposes it was over.

Calmly, with matter-of-fact directness, as though they had not achieved the impossible, they shouldered their peaveys and struck into the broad wagon road. In the middle distance loomed the tall stacks of the mill with the little board town about it. Across the eye spun the thread of the railroad. Far away gleamed the broad expanses of Lake Superior.

The men paired off naturally and fell into a dragging, dogged walk. Thorpe found himself unexpectedly with Big Junko. For a time they plodded on without conversation. Then the big man ventured a remark.

"I'm glad she's over," said he. "I've got a good stake comin'."

"Yes," replied Thorpe, indifferently.

"I got most $600 comin'," persisted Junko.

"Might as well be 600 cents," commented Thorpe, "it'd make you just as drunk."

Big Junko laughed self-consciously, but without the slightest resentment.

"That's all right," said he, "but you betcher life I don't blow this stake."

"I've heard that talk before," shrugged Thorpe.

"Yes, but this is different. I'm goin' to git married on this. How's that?"

Thorpe, his attention struck at last, stared at his companion.

"Who is she?" he asked, abruptly.

"She used to wash at Camp Four."

Thorpe dimly remembered the woman now—an overweighted creature with a certain attraction of elfishly blowing hair, with a certain pleasing full-cheeked, full-bosomed health.

The two walked on in re-established silence. Finally, the giant, unable to contain himself longer, broke out again.

"I do like that woman," said he, with a quaintly deliberate seriousness. "That's the finest woman in this district."

Thorpe felt the quick moisture rush to his eyes. There was something inexpressibly touching in these simple words as Big Junko uttered them.

"And when you are married," he asked, "what are you going to do? Are you going to stay on the river?"

"No, I'm goin' to clear a farm. The woman says that's the thing to do. I like the river, too. But you bet when Carrie says a thing, that's plenty good enough for Big Junko."

Thorpe looked at his companion fixedly. He remembered Big Junko as a wild beast when his passions were aroused, as a man whose honesty had been doubted.

"You've changed, Junko," said he.

"I know," said the big man. "I been a scalawag all right. I quit it. I don't know much, but Carrie she's smart, and I'm goin' to do what she says. When you get stuck on a good woman like Carrie, Mr. Thorpe, you don't give much of a damn for anything else. Sure! That's right! It's the biggest thing top o' earth."

Here it was again, the opposing creed. And from such a source. Thorpe's iron will contracted again.

"A woman is no excuse for a man's neglecting his work," he snapped.

"Shorely not," agreed Junko fiercely. "I aim to finish out my time all right, Mr. Thorpe. Don't you worry none about that. I done my best for you. And," went on the riverman in the expansion of this unwonted confidence with his employer, "I'd like to rise to remark that you're the best boss I ever had, and we boys wants to stay with her till there's skating in hell!"

"All right," murmured Thorpe indifferently. Suddenly the remaining half mile to town seemed very long indeed.

CHAPTER LII.

Wallace Carpenter and Hamilton, the journalist, seated against the sun-warmed bench of Mrs. Hathaway's boarding house, commented on the band as it stumbled into the wash room. Their conversation was interrupted by the approach of Thorpe and Big Junko. The former looked twenty years older after his winter. His eye was dull, his shoulders drooped, his gait was inelastic. The whole bearing of the man was that of one weary to the bone.

"I've got something here to show you, Harry," cried Wallace Carpenter, waving a newspaper. "It was a great drive and here's something to remember it by."

"All right, Wallace, by and by," replied Thorpe, dully. "I'm dead. I'm going to turn in for a while. I need sleep more than anything else."

He passed through the little passage into the "parlor bedroom," which Mrs. Hathaway always kept in readiness for members of the firm. There he fell heavily asleep almost before his body had met the bed.

In the long dining room the river-men consumed a belated dinner. They had no comments to make. It was over.

The two on the veranda smoked. To the right, at the end of the sawdust street, the mill sang its varying and lulling keys. The odor of fresh-sawed pine perfumed the air. Not a hundred yards away the river slipped silently to the distant blue Superior, escaping between the slanting stone-filled cribs which held back the logs. Down the south and west the huge thunder heads gathered and flashed and grumbled, as they had done every afternoon for days.

"Queer thing," commented Hamilton finally, "these cold streaks in the air. They are just as distinct as though they had partitions around them."

"Queer climate anyway," agreed Carpenter.

Excepting only for the mill, the little settlement appeared asleep. The main booms were quite deserted. After awhile Hamilton noticed something.

"Look here, Carpenter," said he, "what's happening out there? Have some of your confounded logs sunk, or what? There don't seem to be near so many of them somehow."

"No, it isn't that," proffered Carpenter after a moment's scrutiny, "there are just as many logs, but they are getting separated a little so you can see the open water between them."

"Guess you're right. Say, look here, I believe that the river is rising!"

"Nonsense, we haven't had any rain."

"She's rising just the same. You see that spile over there near the left-hand crib? Well, I sat on the boom this morning watching the crew, and I whittled the spile with my knife—you can see the marks from here. I cut the thing about two feet above the water. Look at it now."

"She's pretty near the water line, that's right," admitted Carpenter.

About an hour later the younger man in his turn made a discovery.

"She's been rising right along," he submitted. "Your marks are nearer the water, and, do you know, I believe the logs are beginning to feel it. See, they've closed up the little openings between them, and they are beginning to crowd down to the lower end of the pond."

"I don't know anything about this business," hazarded the journalist, "but I should think there was a good deal of pressure on that same lower end. By jove, look there! See those logs up-end? I believe you're going to have a jam right here in your own booms!"

"I don't know," hesitated Wallace. "I never heard of its happening."

"You'd better let some one know."

"I hate to bother Harry or any of the rivermen. I'll just step down to the mill. Mason—he's our mill foreman—he'll know."

Mason came to the edge of the high trestle and took one look.

"Jumping fish-hooks!" he cried. "Why, the river's up six inches and still a comin'! Here, you, Tom!" he called to one of the yard hands, "you tell Solly to get steam on that tug double quick, and have Dave hustle together his driver crew."

"What you going to do?" asked Wallace.

"I got to strengthen the booms," explained the mill foreman. "We'll drive some piles across between the cribs."

"Is there any danger?"

"Oh, no, the river would have to rise a good deal higher than she is now to make current enough to hurt. They've had a hard rain up above. This will go down in a few hours."

After a time the tug puffed up to the booms, escorting the pile driver. The latter towed a little raft of long, sharpened piles, which it at once began to drive in such positions as would most effectually strengthen the booms. In the meantime the thunder-heads had slyly climbed the heavens, so that a sudden deluge of rain surprised the workmen. For an hour it poured down in torrents; then settled to a steady gray beat. Immediately the aspect had changed.

Solly, the tug captain, looked at his mooring hawsers and then at the nearest crib.

"She's riz two inches in th' las' two hours," he announced, "and she's runnin' like a mill race." Solly was a typical north country tug captain, short and broad, with a brown, clear face, and the steadiest and calmest of steel blue eyes. "When she begins to feel th' pressure behind," he went on, "there's goin' to be trouble."

Towards dusk she began to feel that pressure. Through the rainy twilight the logs could be seen raising their ghostly arms of protest. Slowly, without tumult, the jam formed. In the van the logs crossed silently; in the rear they pressed in, were sucked under in the swift water, and came to rest at the bottom of the river. The current of the river began to protest, pressing its hydraulics through the narrowing crevices. The situation demanded attention.

A breeze began to pull off shore in the body of rain. Little by little it increased, sending the water by in gusts, ruffling the already hurrying river into greater haste, raising far from the shore dimly perceived white-caps. Between the roaring of the wind, the dash of rain, and the rush of the stream, men had to shout to make themselves heard.

"Guess you'd better rout out the boss," screamed Solly to Wallace Carpenter; "this damn water's comin' up an inch an hour right along. When she backs up once, she'll push this jam out sure."

Wallace ran to the boarding house and roused his partner from a heavy sleep. The latter understood the situation at a word. While dressing, he explained to the younger man wherein lay the danger.

"If the jam breaks once," said he, "nothing top of earth can prevent it from going out into the lake, and there it'll scatter, heaven knows where. Once scattered, it is practically a total loss."

They felt blindly through the rain in the direction of the lights on the tug and pile driver. Shearer, the water dripping from his flaxen mustache, joined them like a shadow. At the river he announced his opinion. "We can hold her all right," he assured them. "It'll take a few more piles, but by morning the storm'll be over and she'll begin to go down again."

The three picked their way over the creaking, swaying timber. But when they reached the pile driver they found trouble afoot. The crew had mutinied, and refused longer to drive piles under the face of the jam.

"If she breaks loose she's going to bury us," said they.

"She won't break," snapped Shearer. "Get to work."

"It's dangerous," they objected sullenly.

"By God! you get off this driver," shouted Solly. "Go over and lie down in a ten-acre lot and see if you feel safe there!"

He drove them ashore with a storm of profanity and a multitude of kicks, his steel blue eyes blazing.

"There's nothing for it but to get the boys out again," said Tim. "I kinder hate to do it."

But when the Fighting Forty, half asleep, but dauntless, took charge of the driver, a catastrophe made itself known. One of the ejected men had tripped the lifting chain of the hammer after another had knocked away the heavy preventing block, and so the hammer had fallen into the river and was lost. None other was to be had. The pile driver was useless.

A dozen men were at once dispatched for cables, chains and wire ropes from the supply at the warehouse.

"It's part of the same trick," said Thorpe, grimly; "those fellows have their men everywhere among us. I don't know whom to trust."

"You think it's Morrison & Daly?" queried Carpenter, astonished.

"Think? I know it. They know as well as you or I that if we save these logs we'll win out in the stock exchange, and they're not such fools as to let us save them if it can be helped."

"What are you going to do now?"

"The only thing there is to be done. We'll string heavy booms, chained together, between the cribs, and then trust to heaven they'll hold. I think we can hold the jam. The water will begin to flow over the bank before long, so there won't be much increase of pressure over what we have now; and as there won't be any shock to withstand, I think our heavy booms will do the business."

He turned to direct the boring of some long boom logs in preparation for the chains. Suddenly he whirled again to Wallace with so strange an expression in his face that the young man almost cried out. The uncertain light of the lanterns showed dimly the streaks of rain across his countenance and his eye flared with a look almost of panic.

"I never thought of it!" he said in a low voice. "Fool that I am! I don't see how I missed it. Wallace, don't you see what those devils will do next?"

"No. What do you mean?" gasped the younger man.

"There are 12,000,000 feet of logs up river in Sadler & Smith's drive. Don't you see what they'll do?"

"No, I don't believe"——

"Just as soon as they find out that the river is booming, and that we are going to have a hard time to hold our jam, they'll let loose those 12,000,000 on us. They'll break the jam, or dynamite it, or something. And let me tell you that a very few logs hitting the tail of our jam will start the whole shooting match so that no power on earth can stop it."

"I don't imagine they'd think of doing that"— began Wallace by way of assurance.

"Think of it! You don't know them. They've thought of everything. You don't know that man Daly. Ask Tim; he'll tell you."

"Well, the"——

"I've got to send a man up there right away. Perhaps we can get there in time to head them off. They have to send their man over"—— He cast his eye rapidly over the men.

"I don't know just who to send. There isn't a good enough woodsman in the lot to make Siscoe Falls through the woods a night like this. The river trail is too long, and a cut through the woods is blind."

With infinite difficulty and caution they reached the shore. Across the gleaming logs shone dimly the lanterns at the scene of work, ghostly through the rain. Beyond, on either side, lay impenetrable drenched darkness, racked by the wind.

"I wouldn't want to tackle it," panted Thorpe. "If it wasn't for that cursed tote road between Sadler's and Daly's I wouldn't worry. It's just too easy for them."

Behind them the jam cracked and shrieked and groaned. Occasionally was heard, beneath the sharper noises, a dull boom, as one of the heavy timbers, forced by the pressure from its resting place, shot into the air and fell back on the bristling surface.

"Tim Shearer might do it," suggested Thorpe, "but I hate to spare him."

He picked his rifle from its rack and thrust the magazine full of cartridges.

"Come on, Wallace," said he, "we'll hunt him up."

They stepped again into the shriek and roar of the storm, bending their heads to its power, but indifferent to the rain. The sawdust street was saturated like a sponge. They could feel the quick water rise about the pressure at their feet. From the invisible houses they heard a steady monotone of flowing from the roofs. Far ahead, dim in the mist, sprayed the light of lanterns.

Suddenly Thorpe felt a touch on his arm. Faintly he perceived at his elbow a face from which the water streamed.

"Injin Charley!" he cried. "The very man!"

CHAPTER LII.

Rapidly Thorpe explained what was to be done, and thrust his rifle into the Indian's hands. The latter listened in silence and stolidity, then turned and without a word departed swiftly in the darkness. The two white men stood a minute attentive. Nothing was to be heard but the steady beat of rain and the roaring of the wind.

Near the bank of the river they encountered a man, visible only as an uncertain black outline against the glow of the lanterns beyond. Thorpe, stopping him, found Big Junko.

"This is no time to quit," said Thorpe, sharply.

"I ain't quittin'," replied Big Junko. "Where are you going, then?"

Junko was partially and stammeringly unresponsive.

"Looks bad," commented Thorpe. "You'd better get back to your job."

"Yes," agreed Junko, helplessly. In the momentary slack tide of work the giant had conceived the idea of searching out the driver crew for purposes of pugilistic vengeance. Thorpe's suspicions stung him, but his simple mind could see no direct way of explanation.

All night long in the chill of a spring rain and windstorm the Fighting Forty and certain of the mill crew gave themselves to the labor of connecting the slanting stone cribs so strongly, by means of heavy timbers chained end to end, that the pressure of a break in the jam might not sweep aside the defenses. Wallace Carpenter, Shorty, the choreboy, and Anderson, the barn boss, picked a dangerous passage back and forth carrying pails of red-hot coffee, which Mrs. Hathaway constantly prepared. The cold water numbed the men's hands. With difficulty could they manipulate the heavy chains through the augur holes; with pain they twisted knots, bored holes. They did not complain. Behind them the jam quivered, perilously near the bursting point. From it shrieked aloud the demons of pressure. Steadily the river rose, an inch an hour. The key might snap at any given moment—they could not tell—and with the rush they knew very well that themselves, the tug and the disabled pile driver would be swept from existence. The worst of it was that the blackness shrouded their experience into uselessness; they were utterly unable to tell by the ordinary visual symptoms how near the jam might be to collapse.

However, they persisted, as the old-time riverman always does, so that when dawn appeared the barrier was continuous and assured. Although the pressure of the river had already forced the logs against the defenses, the latter held the strain well.

The storm had settled into its gait. Overhead the sky was filled with gray, beneath which darker scuds flew across the zenith before a howling southwest wind. Out in the clear river one could hardly stand upright against the gusts. In the fan of many directions, furious squalls swept over the open water below the booms, and an eager boiling current rushed to the lake.

Thorpe now gave orders that the tug and driver should take shelter. A few moments later he expressed himself as satisfied. The dripping crew, their harsh faces gray in the half-light, picked their way to the shore.

In the darkness of that long night's work no man knew his neighbor. Men from the river, men from the mill, men from the yard, all worked side by side. Thus no one noticed especially a tall, slender, but well knit individual, dressed in a faded mackinaw and a limp slouch hat, which he wore pulled over his eyes. This young fellow occupied himself with the chains. Against the racing current the crew held the ends of the heavy booms while he fastened them together. He worked well, but seemed slow. Three times Shearer hustled him on after the others had finished, examining closely the work that had been done. On the third occasion he shrugged his shoulder somewhat impatiently.

The men straggled to shore, the young fellow just described bringing up the rear. He walked as though tired out, hanging his head and dragging his feet. When, however, the boarding house door had closed on the last of those who preceded him, and the town lay deserted in the dawn, he suddenly became transformed. Casting a keen glance right and left to be sure of his opportunity, he turned and hurried recklessly back over the logs to the center booms. There he knelt and busied himself with the chains.

In his zigzag progression over the jam he so blended with the morning shadows as to seem one of them, and he would have escaped quite unnoticed had not a sudden shifting of the logs under his feet compelled him to rise for a moment to his full height. So Wallace Carpenter, passing from his bed room, along the porch, to the dining room, became aware of the man on the logs.

His first thought was that something demanding instant attention had happened to the boom. He, therefore, ran at once to the man's assistance, ready to help him personally or to call other aid, as the exigency demanded. Owing to the precarious nature of the passage he could not see beyond his feet until very close to the workman. Then he looked up, to find the man, squatted on the boom, contemplating him sardonically.

"Dyer!" he exclaimed.

"Right, my son," said the other, coolly.

"What are you doing?"

"If you want to know, I am filing this chain."

Wallace made one step forward and so became aware that at last firearms were taking a part in this desperate game.

"You stand still," commanded Dyer from behind the revolver. "It's unfortunate for you that you happened along, because now you'll have to come with me till this little row is over. You won't have to stay long; your logs'll go out in an hour. I'll just trouble you to go into the brush with me for awhile."

The scaler picked his file from beside the weakened link.

"What have you against us, anyway, Dyer?" asked Wallace. His quick mind had conceived a plan. At the moment he was standing near the outermost edge of the jam, but now as he spoke he stepped quietly to the boom log.

Dyer's black eyes gleamed at him suspiciously, but the movement appeared wholly natural in view of the return to shore.

"Nothing," he replied. "I didn't like your gang particularly, but that's nothing."

"Why do you take such nervy chances to injure us?" queried Carpenter.

"Because there's something in it," snapped the scaler. "Now, about face; mosey!"

Like a flash, Wallace wheeled and dropped into the river, swimming as fast as possible below water before his breath should give out. The swift current hurried him away. When at last he rose for air, the spit of Dyer's pistol caused him no uneasiness. A moment later he struck out boldly for shore.

What Dyer's ultimate plan might be, he could not guess. He had stated confidently that the jam would break "in an hour." He might intend to start it with dynamite. Wallace dragged himself from the water and commenced breathlessly to run toward the boarding house.

Dyer had already reached shore, Wallace raised what was left of his voice in a despairing shout. The scaler mockingly waved his hat, then turned and ran swiftly and easily toward the shelter of the woods. At their border, he paused again to bow in decision. Carpenter's cry brought men to the boarding house door. From the shadow of the forest two vivid flashes cut the dusk. Dyer staggered, turned completely about, semed partially to recover, and disappeared. An instant later, across the open space, where the scaler had stood, with a rifle a-trail, the Indian leaped in pursuit.

CHAPTER LIII.

"What is it?" "What's the matter?" "What the hell's up?" "What happened?" burst on Wallace in a volley.

"It's Dyer," gasped the young man. "I found him on the boom! He held me up with a gun while he filed the boom chains between the center piers. They're just ready to go. I got away by diving. Hurry and put in a new chain: you haven't much time!"

"He's a gone-er now," interjected Solly grimly. "Charley is on his trail—and he is hit."

Thorpe's intelligence leaped promptly to the practical question.

"Injun Charlie, where'd he come from? I sent him up Sadler & Smith's. It's twenty miles, even through the woods."

As though by way of colossal answer, the whole surface of the jam moved inward and upward, thrusting the logs bristling against the horizon.

"She's going to break," shouted Thorpe, starting on a run towards the river. "A chain, quick."

The men followed, strung high with excitement. Hamilton, the journalist, paused long enough to glance upstream. Then he, too, ran after them, screaming that the river above was full of logs. By that they all knew that Injun Charley's mission had failed, and that something under ten million feet of logs were racing down the river like so many battering rams.

At the boom the great jam was already a-tremble with eagerness to spring. Indeed, a miracle alone seemed to hold the timbers in place.

"It's death, certain death, to go out on that boom," muttered Billy Mason.

Tim Shearer stepped forward coolly, ready as always to assume the perilous duty. He was thrust back by Thorpe, who seized the chain, cold-shut and hammer which Scotty Parsons brought, and ran lightly out over the booms shouting:

"Back! back! Don't follow me, on your lives! Keep 'em back, Tim!"

The swift water boiled from under the booms. Bang! smash! bang! crashed the logs, a mile up-stream, but plainly audible above the waters and the wind. Thorpe knelt, dropped the cold-shut through on either side of the weakened link, and prepared to close it with his hammer. He intended further to strengthen the connection with the other chain.

"Lem' me hold her for you. You can't close her alone," said an unexpected voice next his elbow.

Thorpe looked up in surprise and anger. Over him leaned Big Junko. The men had been unable to prevent his following. Animated by the blind devotion of the animal for its master, and further stung to action by that master's doubt of his fidelity, the giant had followed to assist as he might.

"You damned fool," cried Thorpe exasperated, then held the hammer to him, "strike while I keep the chain underneath," he commanded.

Big Junko leaned forward to obey, kicking strongly his caulks into the barked surface of the boom log. The spikes, worn blunt by the river work already accomplished, failed to grip. Big Junko slipped, caught himself by an effort, overbalanced in the other direction, and fell into the stream. The current at once swept him away, but fortunately in such a direction that he was enabled to catch the slanting end of a "dead head" log whose lower end was jammed in the crib. The dead head was slippery, the current strong; Big Junko had no crevice by which to assure his hold. In another moment he would be torn away.

"Let go and swim!" shouted Thorpe.

"I can't swim," replied Junko in so low a voice as to be scarcely audible.

For a moment Thorpe stared at him.

"Tell Carrie," said Big Junko.

Then there, beneath the swirling gray sky, under the frowning jam, in the midst of flood waters, Thorpe had his second great moment of decision. He did not pause to weigh reasons or chances, to discuss with himself expediency, or the moralities of failure. His actions were foreordained, mechanical. All at once the great forces which the winter had been bringing to power crystallized into something bigger than himself or his ideas. The trial lay before him: there was no choice.

Now clearly, with no shadow of doubt, he took the other view: There could be nothing better than love. Men, their works, their deeds, were little things. Success was a little thing; the opinion of men a little thing. Instantly he felt the truth of it.

And here was Love in danger. That it held its moment's habitation in clay of the coarser mould had nothing to do with the great eternal truth of it. For the first time in his life Thorpe felt the full crushing power of an abstraction. Without thought, instinctively, he threw before the necessity of the moment all that was lesser. It was the triumph of what was real in the man over that which environment, alienation, difficulties had raised up within him.

At Big Junko's words, Thorpe raised his hammer and with one mighty blow severed the chains which bound the ends of the booms across the opening. The free end of one of the poles immediately swung down with the current in the direction of Big Junko. Thorpe like a cat ran to the end of the boom, seized the giant by the collar, and dragged him through the water to safety.

"Run!" he shouted. "Run for your life!"

The two started desperately back, skirting the edge of the logs, which now the very seconds alone seemed to hold back. They were drenched and blinded with spray, deafened with the crash of timbers settling to the leap. The men on shore could no longer see them for the smother. The great crush of logs had actually begun its first majestic sliding motion when at last they emerged to safety.

At first a few of the loose timbers found the opening, slipping quietly through with the current; then more; finally the front of the jam drove forward; and an instant later the smooth, swift motion had gained its impetus and was sweeping the entire drive down through the gap.

Rank after rank, like soldiers charging, they ran. The great fierce wind caught them up ahead of the current. In a moment the open river was full of logs jostling eagerly onward. Then suddenly, far out above the uneven tossing skyline of Superior, the strange northern "loom," or mirage, threw the specters of thousands of restless timbers rising and falling on the bosom of the lake.

CHAPTER LIV.

They stood and watched them go.

"Oh, the great man! Oh, the great man!" murmured the writer, fascinated.

The grandeur of the sacrifice had struck them dumb. They did not understand the motives beneath it all, but the fact was patent. Big Junko broke down and sobbed.

After a time the stream of logs through the gap slackened. In a moment more, save for the inevitably stranded few, the booms were empty. A deep sigh went up from the attentive multitude.

"She's gone!" said one man, with the emphasis of a novel discovery; and groaned.

Then the awe broke from about their minds, and they spoke many opinions and speculations. Thorpe had disappeared. They respected his emotion and did not follow him.

"It was just plain damn foolishness—but it was great!" said Shearer. "That no-account jackass of a Big Junko ain't worth as much per thousand feet as good white pine."

Then they noticed a group of men gathering about the office steps, and on it some one talking. Collins, the bookkeeper, was making a speech.

Collins was a little hatchet-faced man, with straight, lank hair, near-sighted eyes, a timid, order-loving disposition, and a great suitability for his profession. He was accurate, unemotional and valuable. All his actions were as dry as the sawdust in the burner. No one had ever seen him excited. But he was human; and now his knowledge of the company's affairs showed him the dramatic contrast. He knew! He knew that the property of the firm had been mortgaged to the last dollar in order to assist expansion, so that not another cent could be borrowed to tide over present difficulty. He knew that the notes for $60,000 covering the loan to Wallace Carpenter came due in three months; he knew from the long table of statistics which he was eternally preparing and comparing that the season's cut should have netted a profit of $200,000—enough to pay the interest on the mortgages, to take up the notes, and, to furnish a working capital for the ensuing year. These things he knew in the strange concrete arithmetical manner of the routine bookkeeper. Other men saw a desperate phase of firm rivalry: he saw a struggle to the uttermost. Other men cheered a rescue: he thrilled over the magnificent gesture of the gambler scattering his stake in largesse to Death.

It was the simple turning of the hand from full breathed prosperity to lifeless failure.

His view was the inverse of his master's. To Thorpe it had suddenly become a very little thing in contrast to the great, sweet elemental truth that the dream girl had enunciated. To Collins the affair was miles vaster than the widest scope of his own narrow life.

The firm could not take up its notes when they came due; it could not pay the interest on the mortgages, which would now be foreclosed; it could not even pay in full the men who had worked for it—that would come under a court's adjudication.

He had therefore watched Thorpe's desperate sally to mend the weakened chain, in all the suspense of a man whose entire universe is in the keeping of the chance moment. It must be remembered that at bottom, below the outer consciousness, Thorpe's final decision had already grown to maturity. On the other hand, no other thought than that of accomplishment had even entered the little bookkeeper's head. The rescue and all that it had meant had hit him like a stroke of apoplexy, and his thin emotions had curdled to hysteria. Full of the idea he appeared before the men.

With rapid, almost incoherent speech, he poured it out to them. Professional caution and secrecy were forgotten. Wallace Carpenter attempted to push through the ring for the purpose of stopping him. A gigantic riverman kindly but firmly held him back.

"I guess it's just as well we hears this," said the latter.

It all came out—the loan to Carpenter, with a hint at the motive; the machinations of the rival firm on the board of trade; the notes, the mortgages, the necessity of a big season's cut; the reasons the rival firm had for wishing to prevent that cut from arriving at the market; the desperate and varied means they had employed. The men listened silent. Hamilton, his eyes glowing like coals, drank in every word. Here was the master motive he had sought; here was the story great to his hand!

"That's what we ought to get," cried Collins, almost weeping, "and now we're gone and bust, just because that infernal river-hog had to fall off a boom. By God, it's a shame! Those scalawags have done us after all!"

Out from the shadows of the woods stole Injin Charley. The whole bearing and aspect of the man had changed. His eye gleamed with a distant far-seeing fire of its own, which took no account of anything but some remote vision. He stole along almost furtively, but with a proud upright carriage of his neck, a backward tilt of his fine head, a distention of his nostrils that lent to his appearance a panther-like pride and stealthiness. No one saw him. Suddenly he broke through the group and mounted the steps beside Collins.

"The enemy of my brother is gone," said he simply in his native tongue, and with a sudden gesture held out before them—a scalp.

The medieval barbarity of the thing appalled them for a moment. The days of scalping were long since past, had been closed away between the pages of forgotten histories, and yet here again before them was the thing in all its living horror. Then a growl arose. The human animal had tasted blood.

All at once like wine, their wrongs mounted to their head. They remembered their dead comrades. They remembered the heart-breaking days and nights of toil they had endured on account of this man and his associates. They remembered the words of Collins, the little bookkeeper. They hated. They shook their fists across the skies. They turned and with one accord struck back for the railroad right of way which led to Shingleville, the town controlled by Morrison & Daly.

The railroads lay for a mile straight through a thick tamarack swamp, then over a nearly treeless cranberry plain. The tamarack was a screen between the two towns. When half way through the swamp, Red-Jacket stopped, removed his coat, ripped the lining from it, and began to fashion a rude mask.

"Just as well they don't recognize us," said he.

(To be Continued Next Sunday.)

Some Persistent Women

(Cleveland Plain Dealer.)

One of the slickest and most persistent operators to baffle the capitol police was a woman who appeared here shortly after the death of ex-President Harrison and secured permission to exhibit in the room of the sergeant-at-arms of the senate a large oil painting of the dead president. Her ostensible reason was to get congress to buy it. After making the acquaintance of all the senators she gradually blossomed into a full blown book agent. The picture was merely a blind to enable her to get intrenched in the building. She sold the four volumes embracing the life of ex-President Harrison for $20 and bagged a couple of dozen senators before complaints were made. When charged with selling books she boldly denied the accusation and refused to desist until threatened with arrest.

A deformed woman, known as "Little Sunshine," gave the police—and incidentally the senators—even more trouble than the female book agent. She presumed upon her misfortune to ignore all the rules of the senate and house, and pushed by the doorkeepers on guard at the marble room and committee rooms with scarcely hesitation. If interfered with her favorite exclamation was "How dare you touch me, you brutal man." She was usually peddling tickets at $1 each, for the benefi of herself, and pushed them on to senators in blocks of ten. The police finally admited that they were helpless before her, and could no longer keep her in check.

Colonel Ransdell heard of it and declared that he would settle her on her next appearance. The very next day she arrived, brushed by the senate doorkeepers and cornered Senator Mason in the marble room. While Senator Mason was mopping the perspiration from his expansive brow and was protesting that he was a poor man and could not give up $10 for tickets, Colonel Ransdell was sent for. He bore down on the woman with all sails set and fire in his eyes. As he engaged her, Senator Mason made his escape. A half an hour's wrangle ended by Colonel Ransdell buying four tickets and "Little Sunshine" is doing business at the old stand.

At the mention of a certain woman's name to Representative Eddy of Minnesota it is enough to send that valiant statesman flying to his committee room, where he seeks safety under lock and key. Tell him that the "Minnesota Blizzard" is in the capitol and he shows every sign of consternation. The "Minnesota Blizzard" is tall, gaunt and determined. She thinks Uncle Sam owes her a pension and nothing but death will remove that impression. Representative Eddy and Senator Gallinger are her victims, the former being the member from her district and the latter the chairman of the senate pension committee. The "Minnesota Blizzard" was a nurse in the civil war, and claims that her husband was a soldier; hence she wants two pensions, one as nurse and the other as widow. She got a pension as a nurse, and, after dogging Eddy and the members of the pension committee for four years this was increased on the distinct understanding and pledge that she would return to Minnesota and stay there.

She paralyzed Eddy the other day by turning up and exclaiming: "I'm here with blood in my eyes. We have got rid of that old fossil Evans in the pension office and have a western man there who knows a first-class blizzard when he sees it. I am entitled to two pensions, and I am going to stay here until I get 'em."

The police have standing orders to keep the "Minnesota Blizzard" out of the committee rooms of Gallinger and Representative Eddy, and a blue coated officer may always be seen standing in the vicinity of those rooms.

Game Laws in Chicago

(Forest and Stream.)

The "Game Laws in Brief" came pretty near trouble this week here in Chicago. A tall stranger from the lower part of this state, the country more or less commonly described as "Egypt," appeared in the gun department and asked to see the man who sold "Game Laws in Brief." He was met by that interesting gentleman, Mr. Hirth, who blandly inquired his wishes.

"Do you all sell these game law books?" said the stranger.

"We do," said Mr. Hirth, politely.

"They're wrong," said the stranger. "What's the use in puttin' out game laws and not doin' it right?"

This remark raised the sporting blood of Mr. Hirth to the boiling point, and he at once dived into his trousers pocket for the roll of bills which usually reposes there.

"I'll bet you a hundred dollars to your shirt stud," said he, "that the 'Game Laws in Brief' are all right, and I can prove it."

The stranger didn't relish the sight of so much money and backed out of the store, but two days later he showed up again.

"I've got you," said he, "and I'll show you how."

"Do it," said Mr. Hirth, reaching again for his roll.

"Why," said the man from Egypt, "I've looked it all over, and it don't say a word about the 'possum."

You should have seen the scorn upon Mr. Hirth's expressive countenance at that moment. "Sir," said he, with icy dignity, "in the best sporting circles of this country the 'possum is not rated as a game bird. It may be in your country, but not in Chicago."

And yet the stranger was not convinced. "Any book," said he, defiantly, as he departed, "which don't take account of the 'possum is dead wrong, and that's all I've got to say about it."

USE HYPNOTISM.

(Washington Times.)

"Detectives in various parts of the United States," said a federal official the other day, "are trying to secure tangible evidence against a class of offenders who operate by means of hypnotism.

"Some of the suspected persons occupy reputable positions as cashiers; others work their schemes by victimizing honest cashiers. Washington is not free from these offenders.

"When the cashier happens to be the criminal operator his method is to rivet the attention of the customer while change is being counted out. If a ten-dollar bill has been given in payment for a small purchase, change is returned on a basis of $5.

"These suspected operators in the cash office are known, in some instances, to be students of hypnotic arts. By a few well chosen, assertive words, combined with a steady gaze into the eyes of the intended victim, the mind of the patron or customer is diverted from the change handed him, and the discrepancy may not be discovered until some time later.

"When the hypnotic operator is on the other side of the counter or box office, he first engages the cashier in conversation, holds his gaze steadily, and then, proffering a five-dollar bill, calls it a ten, and strange to say, in many instances gets away with his ill-gotten gains.

"These instances of thievery through hypnotic influence are difficult to prove legally, for if caught in the act the operator can always plead that he has made a mistake."